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COORDINATION OF THE POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES OF THE SPECIALIZED AGENCIES AND OTHER BODIES OF THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RELATED TO THE FOLLOWING THEME: INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AGAINST THE ILLICIT PRODUCTION, SALE, DEMAND, TRAFFIC AND DISTRIBUTION OF NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES

Status of international cooperation in drug abuse control within the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General

CONTENTS

		Paragraphs	Page
INTRODUCTION		1 - 2	2
I.	COORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL PROGRAMME	3 - 8	2
II.	AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF COORDINATION	9 - 26	3
III.	SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	27 - 53	7

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INTRODUCTION

1. The General Assembly, in paragraph 8 of its resolution 48/12, requested the Economic and Social Council at its coordination segment in 1994 to examine the status of international cooperation within the United Nations system against the illicit production, sale, demand, traffic and distribution of narcotics and psychotropic substances in order to recommend ways and means to improve such cooperation, and to report thereon to the Assembly at its forty-ninth regular session.

2. The present report on the status of international cooperation in drug abuse control within the United Nations system has been prepared for review by the Economic and Social Council, as mentioned above.

I. COORDINATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS INTERNATIONAL DRUG CONTROL PROGRAMME

3. There has clearly been a growing recognition by the international community of the global threat presented by the drug problem, and of its challenge to societies from the economic, political, social and environmental perspectives. It is, moreover, a problem that requires a holistic/multidisciplinary and balanced approach. Hence the need, not merely for enhanced levels of coordination and cooperation, but for powerfully concerted action.

4. The reports of the Executive Director of the United Nations International Drug Control Programme (UNDCP) on activities of the United Nations in drug control programmes (contained in document E/CN.7/1994/2 of 17 February 1994) and of the Secretary-General on the updated system-wide action plan including agency-specific implementation plans (contained in document E/CN.7/1994/CRP.6 of 22 March 1994) together provide an overview of the measures and progress achieved in the relatively short time elapsed since the decision that led to the creation of UNDCP. The progress achieved has justified the decision taken by the General Assembly in response to the need for what the Assembly, in preambular paragraph 4 of its resolution 45/179, called a more comprehensive and integrated approach to international drug control and a more efficient structure across the United Nations system in order to use available resources in the most efficient way to enable the United Nations to play a central and greatly enhanced role in that field.

5. The Executive Director of UNDCP, while reporting to the Secretary General, has been assigned, as set forth in paragraph 4 of General Assembly resolution 45/179, exclusive responsibility for coordinating and providing effective leadership for all United Nations drug control activities, in order to ensure coherence of actions within the Programme as well as coordination, complementarity and non-duplication of such activities across the United Nations system; more recently, the Assembly, in paragraph 5 of its resolution 48/12, reaffirmed the leadership role of UNDCP as the main focus for concerted international action for drug abuse control and as international coordinator of drug control activities, especially within the United Nations system, and, in section IV, paragraph 1, of its resolution 48/112, reaffirmed the role of the

Executive Director of UNDCP to coordinate and provide effective leadership for all United Nations drug control activities, in order to ensure coherence of action within the Programme.

6. The Commission on Narcotic Drugs, in its role, according to preambular paragraph 10 of General Assembly resolution 48/112, as the principal United Nations policy-making body on drug control issues, had, in discussions at its thirty-sixth session, recognized that UNDCP had a central role to play, not only in coordinating national and regional activities related to drug control, but also in assisting States in their efforts to promote and implement the Global Programme of Action, as contained in General Assembly resolution S-17/2, annex. It should above all assist Governments in formulating and developing strategies and national master plans. 1/

7. While the General Assembly, in paragraph 6 of its resolution 48/12, in calling upon States to take all necessary steps to implement the recommendations contained in the Global Programme of Action at the national, regional and international levels, thereby indicated that the primary responsibility for implementing the Global Programme of Action lay with States, in paragraph 96 of the Global Programme of Action the agencies and entities of the United Nations system were called upon to extend their cooperation and assistance to States in the promotion and implementation of the Global Programme of Action, and in preambular paragraph 3 of Assembly resolution 47/100, to discharge their important role in supported concerted action. More specifically, the Assembly, in paragraph 3 of its resolution 44/141, requested the Secretary-General to coordinate, at the inter-agency level, the development of a United Nations system-wide action plan on drug abuse control aimed at the full implementation of all existing mandates and subsequent decisions of intergovernmental bodies throughout the United Nations system; in section IV, paragraph 2, of its resolution 44/112, the Assembly called for completion of the updated System-Wide Action Plan on Drug Abuse Control in full cooperation with the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in time for review in 1994; and in section IV, paragraph 4, of resolution 48/112, the Assembly called upon all relevant United Nations agencies to incorporate fully into their programmes all the mandates and activities contained in the Action Plan and its annex.

8. Coordination of activities among the organizations of the United Nations system is effected through ACC and its Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions (CCPOQ) and especially through the Subcommittee on Drug Abuse Control. The Joint Consultative Group on Policy (JCGP), consisting of five funding organizations of the United Nations system, which has now been invited to further develop its cooperation with UNDCP, provides another forum for cooperation. 2/ Of particular operational importance are the informal cooperation arrangements between organizations.

II. AN ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATUS OF COORDINATION

At the national and intergovernmental levels

9. Member States represented in the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission on Narcotic Drugs have expressed unflinching

commitment to increase substantially efforts to achieve coordinated action and set priorities in the international fight against abuse, illicit production and traffic of drugs (General Assembly resolution 48/12, preambular paragraph 7); have agreed, inter alia, on strengthening and enhancing the capability of the United Nations to achieve more effective and coordinated cooperation at the international, regional and national levels against the threats posed by illicit production and illicit trafficking and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances (Assembly resolution S-17/2, annex, Political Declaration, para. 25), and that intensification of efforts at the national level and increased intergovernmental cooperation require a commensurate strengthening of the United Nations drug control organs and their secretariats (Assembly resolution S-17/2, annex, Global Programme of Action, para. 93); have resolved that action against drug abuse should be accorded the highest possible priority by the international community (Assembly resolution 44/141, para. 1); and have urged all Governments to provide the fullest possible financial and political support to UNDCP (Assembly resolution 48/112, sect. V, para. 2). These commitments have been translated into action in regard, inter alia, to the strengthening of the United Nations structures and the flow of resources, especially extrabudgetary ones, for drug control programmes.

10. What is lacking to a large extent, however, is the crucial element of consistency of the positions of Member States in the various other United Nations forums. Member States have been urged, as already noted, to ensure that their agendas consistently reflect and accord adequate priority to drug control activities (General Assembly resolution 48/12, para. 7); 3/ to examine the need for a mandate on drug control (in the light of the Global Programme of Action and subsequent instruments and resolutions); and to assess the activities undertaken to comply with the Action Plan and, as appropriate, report on how the issue of drug control is taken into account in the relevant programmes (Assembly resolution 48/112, sect. IV, para. 7). In fact, such follow-up has, it would appear, been undertaken in few governing bodies. Nor would it suffice to merely reaffirm commitment, as some have done, to the importance of drug control activities unless there is simultaneously some indication of the priority to be accorded to those activities as reflected, in turn, in the given organization's programme and budget document and in its work programme.

11. It is similarly clear that the elaboration of master plans, defining States' objectives and priorities and determining the steps to be taken to implement national strategies 4/ is not only essential for national policy planning but is also a prerequisite of elaborating coherent subregional, regional, and international plans of action. So too, national coordinating committees - crucial to the coordination of the activities of different agencies 5/ - and national monitoring mechanisms on the nature and extent of drug abuse are mechanisms that impact on the degree of coordination of United Nations system activities. Relatively few Member states have elaborated master plans or established coordination committees or monitoring mechanisms.

Within the United Nations system

12. UNDCP has been assigned a clear role, not merely as the central funding organization for drug control programmes and activities, but in providing effective leadership and coordination, especially within the United Nations

system (General Assembly resolution 48/12, para. 5); organizations of the system are in turn urged to cooperate fully in this regard.

13. Notwithstanding the progress achieved especially since the creation of UNDCP approximately three years ago, and the fact that its primary policy-making organ has commended it for its efforts to promote inter-agency coordination, 6/ and that bilateral donors (the Dublin group) are encouraging it to play a broader coordinating role, there is clearly much room for improvement (see document E/CN.7/1994/2, para. 84). UNDCP's coordinating role not only presents a major challenge, but is central to its future, and in fact constitutes its raison d'être. The fact that some of the prerequisites of coordination are as yet lacking in no way lessens this responsibility, but rather emphasizes the importance of, and should be a further stimulus to enhancing, the coordination efforts of the United Nations system. The aim should be to optimize coherence and coordination in the given circumstances and to this end, UNDCP must exercise its promotional, catalytic and coordination role in the full measure that its role (also) as the central funding organization permits.

14. Any form of coordination or collaboration must be preceded by the existence of certain basic instruments and tools and should develop through a common understanding of the nature and scope of the problem. Important among those instruments are drug information systems that include data on the patterns and extent of drug abuse and trafficking. Ideally, agencies involved in such matters should have common databases.

15. Principles or guidelines drawing on policy positions articulated in the context of relevant forums and working agreements with individual agencies (as have been reached with some) could also facilitate coordination. In the case of such agreements, form should follow substance, lest they remain formal documents.

16. Coordination must not be allowed to become an end in itself, but must be focused around substantive goals and objectives that would enhance the total impact of the system's activities. A fundamental prerequisite of United Nations system activities is a frame of reference involving a concise articulation of UNDCP's and the system's strategic goals and priorities, one that should be specific enough to be meaningful, and general enough to be applicable in the range of unique country, subregional and even regional circumstances. The elaboration of that frame of reference by, in the first instance, UNDCP, should be of the highest priority but it needs to be borne in mind that the system should not - indeed, cannot - attempt to cover the almost all-encompassing range of activities identified in the Global Programme of Action. It must be selective and focus on priority areas as determined in the light of national, subregional and regional strategies, and where the United Nations system is perceived to have a comparative advantage. The draft strategy should then be further developed together with agencies and entities of the system.

17. National master plans prepared by each Government, with assistance as required from the system, are indeed the cornerstone of the planning process and provide the essential framework for planning and coordinating international action. The development of such master plans is, however, a process that is dependent upon a Government's commitment and leadership/ownership, and it is

similar to other development processes such as the Programme Approach and the Country Strategy Note. Unfortunately, this requirement has been met by only a few countries; but where plans exist, they provide a sound framework for inter-agency collaboration and a framework for all assistance.

18. UNDCP's Country Programme Framework (CPF) has provided some semblance of a framework even though its value is limited by the fact that agencies and entities have evidently not been involved in the process and, even more important, that it often does not flow from a national strategy or master plan and therefore may not have the operational support that is required to implement it, or is not likely to be sustained once the external assistance and resources are terminated. This once again emphasizes how much the success of international efforts is dependent on national-level commitment.

19. The preparation of master plans and CPFs, and indeed of any related action, must be based on a clear knowledge and understanding of the country situation. Country profiles providing a "situational analysis", identifying multisectoral linkages, and setting them in the context of overall development, are a fundamental requirement and deserve high priority. They should be the result of a joint undertaking of all relevant agencies and entities of the United Nations system and should draw on the results of the work of national monitoring systems where they exist. Such collaboration would be facilitated through working groups - with a lead agency - that undertook the situational analysis, prepared an inventory of ongoing programmes and reviewed them in relation to the situational analyses, and then formulated a system-wide draft plan of action.

20. Despite the considerable time and effort devoted to its preparation, the system-wide action plan leaves much to be desired. It does not meet the requirements (a statement of purposes, a reasonable time-frame for implementation of each portion of the action plan, and a realistic cost estimate) identified by the General Assembly in paragraph 3 (b) of its resolution 44/141, and is at present no more than a compilation - indeed a patchwork - of drug-related projects, many of them seemingly being undertaken by each agency and entity independently of the others. They are even presented by agency rather than by themes, thus accentuating the fact that they appear to be a series of largely uncoordinated activities. This state of affairs, and the fact that discussions on the action plan's format have been rather inconclusive for nearly three years, would seem to stem, on the one hand, from the absence of clear agency priorities and on the other, from the lack of a sufficiently representative group of national master plans as an essential basis for elaborating agency implementation plans that are responsive to national needs and priorities.

21. UNDCP has given emphasis to the elaboration of regional and especially subregional strategies. This is entirely appropriate, though it too is constrained by the insufficient commitment of some Governments to the drug issue, and to the absence of the necessary precondition - clear national strategies - once again emphasizing the need for an essentially bottom-up approach.

22. The ACC Subcommittee on Drug Abuse Control provides an adequate mechanism for inter-agency collaboration. Recent improvements in its functioning in the

framework of ACC/Organizational Committee (OC) guidelines should be pursued and the risks of bureaucratic coordination minimized through, inter alia, more focused agendas, timely and well-prepared documentation, and concise reports. In particular, inter-sessional informal working groups of the agencies most directly involved, focused around specific themes and led by the agency with a comparative advantage, could greatly enhance the Subcommittee's effectiveness. It should include in its agenda the finalization of agreements on the United Nations system's strategic goals and priorities, and on a framework for preparing common databases, terminology, research programmes, training strategies, and principles to guide inter-agency cooperation.

23. Full use should be made of the opportunities created by the invitation to JCGP to further develop its cooperation with UNDCP; agreements reached therefrom could be a building block for reaching system-wide understandings and approaches.

24. In the final analysis, the heart of the Programme lies at the field level. A well-coordinated bottom-up approach will best ensure success in achieving the objectives assigned to UNDCP. The important roles of the Resident Coordinators/Representatives and of UNDCP's Country Directors require that roles and relationships - including those among headquarters, country and regional offices - be clear and that they receive the necessary policy directives and guidelines which should be set within the framework of the ACC guidelines on the Resident Coordinator system and on the various programming processes.

25. The importance of the training of national staff to help build national capacities, and of the training and orientation of UNDCP and United Nations system staff, especially country teams, requires more emphasis (also from a coordination viewpoint); and current initiatives should be actively pursued on the basis of a common training strategy or plan.

26. Reporting requirements of intergovernmental bodies impose a disproportionate burden on UNDCP and the agencies and entities of the system and divert staff and resources from their substantive work. Responses in the past have been lengthy and inadequately focused 7/ and far exceed the limits set by the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General. 8/

III. SUMMARY OF CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

27. While there has been a significant degree of progress since the creation of UNDCP in enhancing the coordination of United Nations system activities, the essence of which has not always been fully captured in reports, there is clearly "much room for improvement".

At the national and intergovernmental levels

Continuing efforts should be made to ensure that:

28. Member States are better apprised of the policy and financial implications of the decisions they may take, including the preconditions and constraints of United Nations system support to their programmes and activities.

29. Member States represented in the various governing bodies of the system review the mandates (General Assembly resolution 48/112, sect. IV, para. 7) and, more particularly, the priority (Assembly resolution 48/12, para. 7) to be given to drug control activities, and allocate commensurate resources for, at least, elaborating and promoting them.

30. Member States similarly endeavour to obtain the support of international, regional and national financial institutions for drug control activities (General Assembly resolution S-17/2, annex, Global Programme of Action, para. 43).

31. National drug control master plans, defining objectives, priorities and strategies are elaborated by Governments as an essential foundation for the elaboration of subregional, regional and international programmes of action - and hence for United Nations system-wide coordination.

Within the United Nations system

UNDCP's coordination role

32. UNDCP has a clear and important responsibility for coordinating and providing effective leadership especially within the United Nations system. It is essential that such coordination efforts be focused around common strategic goals and priorities, recognize the existing mandates of agencies and entities and draw fully on what the General Assembly, in preambular paragraph 3 of its resolution 45/179, referred to as their valuable knowledge, expertise and experience, with due regard to UNDCP's accountability for the funds placed at its disposal. Those efforts should furthermore be carried out on the basis of a common understanding of the scope and content of the drug problem and within the framework of commonly agreed strategies at the international, regional, subregional and, especially, national levels. Coordination efforts should, moreover, be proactive and go beyond the avoidance of duplication of efforts, and promote mutually supportive activities.

33. The highest priority should be given to the elaboration and refinement of UNDCP's and the system's strategic goals and priorities. In this connection, a more detailed framework for collaboration between UNDCP and the main partners among the agencies and entities of the system should be prepared; all proposals for UNDCP funding should fall within that framework and hence constitute part of a system-wide effort.

34. A much closer substantive working relationship should be developed between UNDCP and the main partner agencies and entities. While focal points,

preferably at the policy level, do facilitate such relationships, systematic resort should be had to ad hoc informal working groups that function under the lead agency concept.

35. Collaboration should be promoted with United Nations system partners in elaborating common terminology and principles to guide their cooperation.

36. Draft programmes should be prepared, for discussion with UNDCP's United Nations system partners, for research and for the development of a common database, drawing also on any work done in this connection through national monitoring systems. The data collected should be shared with all organizations on a continuous basis.

37. Priority should be given to additional studies on the socio-economic impact of illicit drug production, trafficking and abuse as an important part of UNDCP's promotional work so as to sensitize its partners to the developmental implications of the drug problem and to make that problem an essential component of development policies and plans.

38. UNDCP should play an increasingly active part in making other governing bodies and their individual representatives more fully seized of the drug problem to ensure that adequate financial and human resources are allocated for the further development and implementation of drug control activities designed in cooperation with UNDCP.

Master plans

39. The preparation of master plans based on sound data and situational analyses - which is the primary responsibility of Governments themselves - is essential to the bottom-up approach that best ensures the relevance and impact of international assistance, and the sustainability of the national programme thereafter.

40. The process for assisting in the preparation of master plans and UNDCP's capacities in this regard should be reviewed and consideration given to a specific budget or source of funds for UNDCP and agency support to the process. The expertise and resources of relevant organizations of the system should be drawn upon when developing national and regional strategies for drug abuse control.

41. Even where Governments are not committed to the master plan concept or where a plan is initially not required or feasible, the Country Programming Framework (CPF) should be elaborated, in collaboration with UNDCP's United Nations system partners, and used as an input into wider programming frameworks, for example, the Country Strategy Notes.

International financial institutions

42. The role of international financial institutions in United Nations system-wide activities has as yet been limited but does afford various opportunities.

43. UNDCP should, having elaborated its own proposals, further the dialogue with those institutions with a view to their direct involvement in (a) drug-oriented economic research activities, particularly with a view to assessing the economic and social impact of illicit production, trafficking and abuse; (b) sustainable alternative development schemes in areas where illicit cultivation takes place; and (c) activities aimed at combating money laundering. The initial contacts already established with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other relevant bodies for the purpose of addressing the money laundering issue should be actively pursued on the basis also of UNDCP's own ideas on the scope and content of such a study.

Inter-agency mechanisms

44. The functioning of the ACC Subcommittee on Drug Abuse Control could be further enhanced. Agreements reached through further development of JCGP's cooperation with UNDCP could be a building block for reaching system-wide understanding and approaches.

45. ACC guidelines on the functioning of its machinery should be fully implemented, especially in regard to more focused agenda, timely and well-prepared documentation, and concise reports. Agenda items should, inter alia, include the elaboration of system goals and priorities, and common terminology, databases, research programmes, training plans, and principles to guide inter-agency cooperation.

46. Greater resort should generally be had both within and outside the functioning of the ACC Subcommittee to ad hoc and informal working groups/task forces/functional groups, focused on specific substantive themes and issues, and led by the organization most directly involved and/or the one with a comparative advantage. Such groups would involve only those agencies and entities with the potential to contribute and should, in the interests of costs, make maximum use of electronic mail (e-mail) facilities.

Field coordination

47. The field structure must in every sense be at the heart of UNDCP's and the system's programmes and activities. Effective coordination of efforts at the field level is therefore of paramount importance.

48. There needs to be a clear definition of the purpose, format and approach to master plans and their relationships to wider programme frameworks such as the Country Strategy Notes.

49. Guidelines on inter-agency coordination processes within the framework of those already issued by ACC in regard to the Resident Coordinator system need to be elaborated for the field level, as well as for such programming processes as the Programme Approach and the Country Strategy Note, and for the relationship among those processes and master plans and CPFs.

50. UNDP Resident Representatives in their capacity as representatives of UNDCP are in a pivotal position to promote synergy of drug control activities at the field level among organizations of the United Nations system, including the

Bretton Woods institutions, and should be encouraged to form ad hoc inter-agency working groups - with a lead agency - on substantive issues as well as to ensure that coherent action emerges through relevant planning and programming tools.

Training and orientation

51. The commitment of UNDCP personnel and other United Nations system staff to enhanced coordination and cooperation depends on their full understanding of their organization's mandate and role in the wider context of the system's programmes and activities. The ability of national Governments to discharge their central role depends on the existence of an adequate institutional framework and capacity, which should be strengthened through training.

52. An orientation programme focused around the United Nations country teams on drug control issues should be elaborated, and the introduction of the drug component into ongoing agency and system programmes, including those at the International Training Centre of the International Labour Organization, in Turin, should be ensured.

53. Coordinated training programmes to strengthen national capacities should be developed as a matter of priority.

Notes

1/ See Official Records of the Economic and Social Council, 1993, Supplement No. 9 (E/1993/29/Rev.1), para. 134.

2/ Ibid., chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution IX, operative para. 7.

3/ See also ibid., para. 143 and chap. I, sect. A, draft resolution IX, operative paras. 3 and 4. Few if any organizations have given consideration to the provisions of the Global Programme of Action addressed specifically to them.

4/ Ibid., para. 117.

5/ Ibid., para. 119.

6/ Ibid., para. 144.

7/ The length of progress reports in the United Nations system tends to be in inverse proportion to the progress being reported.

8/ See General Assembly resolutions 36/117 A to D, Economic and Social Council resolution 1979/41, and the note by the Secretary-General on control and limitation of documentation (A/INF/48/1), paras. 48-50.